

Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Leadership Styles in Nigerian Work Organisations

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Abstract

This research project investigated four managerial leadership styles in Nigerian organizations. The research question that the research tries to address is: to what extent are the leadership styles expressed in modern management theories consistent with Nigerian Traditional values? The findings do confirm that the perceived leadership style in the organizations by the managers is autocratic, the preferred style is the paternalistic and the rejected is the autocratic. For about one in five Nigerian managers, the democratic style is the most often rejected. The study challenges the validity of dominant Western universal perspectives in managerial leadership in traditional African organizations. The study suggests that elements of traditional values pose serious challenge to Nigerian managers' ability to adopt traditional and modern management practice that can improve the effectiveness of leadership in their organizations

Keywords: Africa, Culture, Leadership styles, Management, Values, Traditional, Nigeria

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1. Introduction

Issues related to cultural values and management in developing countries is a continuing focus of academic interest (Kanungo and Mendonça, 1996; Hofstede, 2007, Jackson, 2004). However, there remains a paucity of published work on traditional values and managerial leadership styles in Nigeria. Development of management and leadership in Nigeria requires knowledge of the effects of culture on management and leadership, and on how the Nigerian managers and professional non-managers cope with the traditional value ambiguities, complexities and inconsistencies in the practice of managerial leadership styles. In this respect, the place and effect of Traditional values in managerial leadership styles is one of the major concerns of socio-economic development research in Nigeria. Whilst the Nigerian elites are very knowledgeable about accepted values, models and theories of the Western societies, knowledge about the cultural and traditional values of their society is rather limited. The Nigerian elites may not perceive or understand the obligations imposed upon them by the Western cultures to which they are acculturated, nor the traditional society into which they were born and raised. Hence, their ability to contribute something original to their societal development is limited by this lack of knowledge.

A major theme in management discourse in Nigeria is the issue of 'Modernity' and 'Tradition' of managerial leadership practices. The concept of 'Modernity' in this regard connotes Nigerian managers and professional non-managers to adopt Western management concepts in dealing with local organizational forms and circumstances.

In contrast to this theme in Nigerian management, empirical evidence from Nigerian and non-Nigerian management, organizational and intercultural management scholars (Iguisi and Hofstede 1993; Iguisi 2014; Ahiauzu 1997; Dia 1996; Kamoche 1993; Boon 2005; Hofstede 1980, 2011; Whitley 2000) emphasized that management and the practice of leadership styles are embedded in traditional and socio-cultural values of each society. The concept of 'Traditional'

values here connotes:

Individual and reference group perspectives on relative valence of values

- i. Norms and accepted rules of behaviour
- ii. Opinions, attitudes and beliefs of the individual and reference groups
- iii. Social relationship systems
- iv. The residual effects of history

Traditional values simply mean the values coming from tradition rather than any specific philosopher, moralist, or writer. This means the traditional value of family for example, of non-Western societies may be wildly at variance from any Western notion of family value. Societies based on traditional values tend to place high value on the maintenance of traditional culture and values. It is related to the concept of traditional authority and folk culture.

Traditional values can also mean the actual values that are claimed or perceived to have remained relatively unchanged for centuries, for example the values of extended family, the preservation of respect for elders etc.

2. Theoretical Frame of the Study

2.1 Management and Cross-Cultural Leadership Behaviour

Cross-cultural research has identified differences in what constitutes leadership behaviour from culture to culture (House, 1999; Gerstner & Day, 1994; Brodbeck, 2000; Den Hartog, 1999). This suggests leadership behaviour may be deeply rooted in broader cultural contexts. The fit between expected leadership styles and individual behaviour in leadership positions has been shown to be important to the success of the leadership process (Bass, 1998). Therefore the identification of differences in leadership styles within the Nigerian cultures may be important to the success of organisational management.

2.2 Construct Definitions of Leadership and Culture

Leadership has been a topic of study for social scientists for much of the 20th century (Yukl, 1994), yet there is no consensually agreed-upon definition of leadership (Bass, 1990). A seemingly endless variety of definitions have been developed, but almost all have at their core the concept of influence--leaders influence others to help accomplish group or organizational objectives. The variety of definitions is appropriate, as the degree of specificity of the definition of leadership should be driven by the purposes of the research. Smith and Bond (1993) specifically note: "If we wish to make statements about universal or etic aspects of social behavior, they need to be phrased in highly abstract ways. Conversely, if we wish to highlight the meaning of these generalizations in specific or emic ways, then we need to refer to more precisely specified events or behaviors" (p. 58). Our goals are both etic (investigating aspects of leadership practices that are comparable across cultures) and emic (examining and describing culture-specific differences in leadership practices and their effectiveness). We recognize and expect that the evaluative and semantic interpretation of the term *leadership*₂ and the ways in which leadership and organizational processes are enacted, are likely to vary across cultures, but we also expect that some aspects of leadership will be universally endorsed.

Leadership has been defined here as: *the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members* and defines a leader as a "group member whose influence on group attitudes, performance, or decision making greatly exceeds that of the average member of the group." As with *leadership*₂ there is no consensually agreed upon definition among social scientists for the term *culture*₂. Generally speaking, *culture* is used by social scientists to refer to a set of parameters of collectives that differentiate the collectives from each other in meaningful ways. The focus is on the "sharedness" of cultural indicators among members of the collective. The specific criteria used to differentiate cultures usually depend on the preferences of the investigator and the issues under investigation, and tend to reflect the discipline of the investigator. For our purpose, we theoretically define *culture* as shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives.

3. Leadership Theories

Several writers have considered why some leadership styles frequently produce better results than others, yet almost all of them agree that the styles used should depend not only on the leader but also the led. Among eminent authors of seminal research in the area of leadership theory are Rensis Likert (1967); Fred Fiedler (1967); Robert Blake and Jane Mouton (1964).

In this study, all leadership theories will not be reviewed; rather, there will be specific focus on Likert's (1967) four styles of leadership: (1) exploitative-authoritative, (2) benevolent-authoritative, (3) consultative, and (4) participative, which are frequently found in the styles of leadership in Nigeria. Investigation of these leadership styles make it possible to show whether this classical Western management theory can be applied in Nigerian societies. This is not to say that other leadership theories cannot be put through the same review as the selected but chosen one is the most frequently applied by managers in Nigeria.

3.1 Likert's Leadership Theory

A pioneer in theory formulation, Likert developed a four-style approach to leadership ranging from a very flexible and democratic style to one that is highly autocratic.

Likert's theory focuses on styles of management in which leadership is conceived to be the main component. His questionnaire (Likert 1967, pp. 3-10) has 'leadership processes' as one of the seven variables. The other variables are:

- i. Motivational forces
- ii. Communications,
- iii. Interaction-influence
- iv. Decision-making
- v. Goal setting
- vi. Control processes

"Leadership processes" is used as a classification variable yielding the four styles of management: (1) exploitative-authoritative, (2) paternalistic-authoritative, (3) consultative, and (4) participative. These styles are based on varying degrees of trust and confidence that each exhibits towards the subordinates. The following is a brief description of the four styles.

Style 1: Exploitative-Authoritative: This style has no confidence and trust in subordinates. It relies on centralized decision making from the top of the organisation. Subordinates are not involved in any important decision-making. Downward communication is the main means of transmitting information within the organisation in this style.

Style 2: Paternalistic-Authoritative: The relationship between superior and subordinate in this style resembles that of master-servant. Leaders express a condescending confidence and trust towards subordinates. An informal organisation may develop within this style that does not always oppose the formal organisational goals.

Style 3: Consultative: While leaders have substantial but not absolute amount of confidence in subordinates, they still prefer to maintain control over most decisions. The top-level leaders make strategic decisions. The informal organisation that usually develops within the formal organisation may have an ambivalent attitude towards the formal organisational goal.

Style 4: Participative: The participative leadership style is characterized by complete confidence and trust in subordinates. Decentralized decision-making differentiates this style from the other three styles. Control is decentralized throughout the organisational hierarchy. There is a great overlap between formal and informal organisation often they are one and the same.

Likert (1967) deals with the functional nature of the participative style and the dysfunctional nature of the autocratic style. Likert argued that the participative style should be effective for all kinds of organisations, tasks and situations.

According to Likert, research findings, based primarily in the United States, support his argument that leaders who use the participative style of leadership were more effective, not only in terms of achievement of production goals but in maintaining high worker's morale within and between departments in an organisation, than were leaders who use a style leaning more towards autocratic.

4. Traditional Values in Nigerian Cultures

Values according to Storey (1997) provides more general guidelines. According to Storey, values are beliefs that something is good and desirable by people. By this, it is possible to conclude that values define what is important, worthwhile, and worth striving for. Values are said to vary from culture to culture.

In Nigeria, the value of extended family (with grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins, and with the father's additional wives and their children) is an economic unit that must care for itself. Families are collectives sharing a common kinship lineage and living and collaborating in a village, for common security in the face of threats by nature and by man. According to Quere (1986), the family plays a fundamental and globalising role in traditional African society by imposing and enforcing norms and values. It holds an economic dimension since the family constitutes the unit of production, distribution, and consumption. The family is conceived of as an extended kinship group. Kinship groups extend from the past through the present to the future. Every member of the family is taught to accept his place in the group and to behave in a way to bring honour to it (Behrend, 1988).

Individualism is suppressed, and from an early age a person is taught to accept his or her place within the kinship organisation as determined by age. Only those who have attained sufficient age and experience have a voice in deciding family affairs.

Given the central role of the extended family, it is clear that the sanctions of kin carry considerable weight, and heavy pressure to conform can therefore be exerted by those in power and position of authority (Blunt, 1992: 244). The extent to which leaders conform to the above traditional value is a fairly robust prediction of their success or failure.

Within the Nigerian traditional society, authority as a value, is distributed according to position within the kinship group. The head of a community carries responsibility for the members. Delegation of authority is almost non-existent. Assisted by a council of elders, the leader makes his own decisions. Elders are considered to possess wisdom due to life experiences. They control socially accepted behaviour within the community. Younger members must respect their decisions. The effect is to keep interaction patterns stable.

However, the chiefs and leaders in Nigerian society do not wield power and authority without corresponding obligations. Each society has the mechanism for checking abuse of office and incompetence. The first control comes in form of popular expectations on the conduct of rulers. The chief or leader is expected to be "reputable", "worthy" of the office, and "just" in his dealings with his subjects. He is also expected to be the "father" of the community; he must rule with "wisdom"; he must be "generous", and must not abuse his office. On becoming a chief or leader, he is expected to abandon his boyhood associates and act properly like a chief. His oath of office includes the pledge to attend faithfully and promptly to his official duties, and so enforce community laws and custom.

The "advisers" and intermediaries impose the second check, among many other checks. The chief rarely acts alone when formulating policy or making declarations on community laws and customs. Members of the chief's council or the council of elders frequently contribute advice.

5. Modernity versus Tradition in Nigerian Cultures

The work of Odubogun (1992) shows that there is an ongoing gradual transformation of Nigerian societies from a purely traditional one to a mixture of traditional and modern values. According to Odubogun, the gradual increase in the number of Western-trained Nigerians has led to this change in traditional society, to the point that many 'Western-trained' Nigerians are openly declaring themselves Westernized and individualists who no longer have regard for traditional practices emphasizing collectivist values. Such people find it more beneficial and convenient to seek their own self-interest rather than the collective interest. The problem lies not in the gradual modernity or transformation,

but in the difficulties arising from coexistence of the traditional ways of collectivist values and Western-derived individualist values. The problem emphasizes the fact that most Westernized “liberated” Nigerians often at convenient moments revert back to traditional values, especially if it benefits them to do so. In which case one cannot easily predict which end of the continuum they fall, as their behaviour patterns do not seem to reflect values but opportunistic behaviour. For example, most Nigerian leaders and managers attempt to satisfy traditional norms with Western thinking. In situations where combinations of cognitive and social skills are acquired, individualist and collectivist values tend to clash. This becomes quite confusing for the Nigerian managers and leaders, and impairs building an authentic universally accepted managerial leadership style in Nigerian organisations.

The argument is not that Nigeria now needs “to return” to its ancient, indigenous traditions or cultural roots. The argument concerns Nigeria’s present managerial leadership crisis, seen as a clash of tradition and modernity, leaving open the search for a more adaptive and effective managerial leadership model. There has, of course, been no shortage of proponents of a return to cultural root of Nigerian traditional values (Ahiauzu, 1998; Dia, 1996; Jackson, 2000, Mbigi, 1997) to some form of African ‘authenticity’, as a way of reconstructing effective managerial leadership realities in Nigeria congruous with the local environment of management.

6. Research and Methodology

6.1 The Research Study and its Objectives

The major objective of the research study is to explore leadership styles in Nigerian organizations. In exploring the relationship between culture and managerial leadership styles, the question to be addressed is: to what extent is the leadership styles expressed in Western management theories consistent with the Nigerian (work-related) values? It is speculated here that ‘a possible Nigerian leadership style would probably be an expression of the Nigerian traditional values.

This study investigated perceived and preferred leadership styles by Nigerian managers and professionals, while specifically focusing on management issues around which their cultural understandings are structured. From conceptual perspectives, managerial leadership style is affected both by modern and traditional values perspectives

6.2 The Research Methods and Procedures

The respondents in this study consisted of employees of varying educational background. Some are highly educated managers and some are highly educated professional non-managers. They are people who have had their formal education through university level or equivalent. Some acquired their education abroad, mostly in European and American universities, while others acquired their education in their home country in Western type universities and institutions.

The empirical research was conducted in three cement organisations based in three states of Nigeria.

The study design used exploratory research methods; collecting attitudinal responses by means of structured questionnaire surveys and in-depth interview methods. According to Kidder (1981), flexibility is the key advantage of exploratory research. The aim of combination of the two methods is to bring about understanding of the traditional values complexity inherent in modern practice of managerial leadership in Nigerian organisations. The research and development unit of Euro-African Management Research Centre (E-AMARC) composed the survey questionnaire. The questionnaire used as a basis was the ‘Value Survey Module’ developed by Hofstede (1994) for cross-national comparison of work-related values, but was extended with tailor-made questions derived from the Nigerian interviews.

The questionnaire was designed to obtain a fair representation of the opinions of two categories of respondents: Managers (anybody leading the work of others) and non-managers (higher educated professionals).

The questionnaire numbers 52 questions, but several of the questions contain multiple lines; the total number of choices to be made in answering the questionnaire is 99 designed for this study. The questionnaire is made on a five-point scale. For some demographic items, more detailed rating scales are provided.

Formal approval was sought from the three organisations before administration of the questionnaires. The managing directors and general managers of the organisations gave approval for the administration of the questionnaire.

500 copies of the questionnaire were administered in June 2012 to respondents in the three cement organisations from which 314 usable were returned representing a response rate of 62 percent.

In analysing the results of the questionnaire, the study made use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Except for nominal data, the study ran statistical means, standard deviation and standardised scores.

In analysing the data, the study treated the ordinal data as "quasi-interval" answers. This permits the use of the mean score of a particular question for a variety of statistical treatments.

6.3 The Research Qualitative Method

Because the research inquiries were centred on dimensions of traditional values and leadership styles and because an employee should have spent some years in their respective work organisation to be able to talk about the issues the research sought to explore, manager and non-manager employees that had worked in their respective organisations for 5 years or more were interviewed.

Due to limitations in the use of quantitative methods to understand and explain values, perceptions and behaviours of employees in an organisation, it becomes imperative, if we are to generalise the results of the data that a descriptive, non-quantitative behavioural method also be used to unravel values, perceptions and behaviours of the employees in the organisations. The qualitative fieldwork for the present study was conducted in the same Nigerian cement organisations where the quantitative data were collected.

The interview phase used unstructured open-ended discussions with a sample of 25 randomly selected manager and non-manager employees in the organisations. Out of the 25 managers, 10 were managers qualified to first degree level with more than 7-year post-qualification experience and 15 were non-manager professionals qualified to first degree level but with less than 7-year post-qualification experience. Based on the criteria of having five or more years of work experience in the organisation, the interviewees were selected by the researcher with the assistance of the human resources department in the organisations. The objective of this unstructured open-ended interview is to elicit information on the traditional managerial values that allows for meaningful socio-cultural explanations of the data expressed by the respondents in the quantitative questionnaire survey. The reason for this combination is to allow for the presentation of deeper understanding of the reasons and assumptions inherent in the expressed views about leadership styles identified in the quantitative data.

6.4 The Research Population

In order to correct for the imbalance in the composition of the samples among managers (man.) and non-managers (nman.), we will always base the job-groups and country-wide comparisons on $[\text{man} + \text{nman}] / 2$, i.e. on a straight mean of the scores for the two groups, given equal weight to each. The non-managers are professional employees

Table 1 shows relevant demographic data from the group of respondents across the organisations.

Table 1: Demographic Data

size	Company. A	Company. B	Company. C Sample
	257	57	146
Managers	33 %	30 %	24 %
Non managers	67 %	70 %	76 %
Total:	100 %	100 %	100 %
Education: (>13 yrs)			
Managers	78 %	79 %	57 %
Non managers	53 %	51 %	60 %
Age over 40			
Managers	59 %	60 %	76 %
Non managers	26 %	19 %	64 %
Position at Work			
Managers	32%	26%	23%
Professional Non-managers	35%	47%	20%
Immediate family size (>4)			
Managers	71 %	47 %	9 %
Non managers	58 %	41 %	9 %
Number of Dependents (>4)			
Managers	85 %	73 %	21 %
Non managers	78 %	70 %	8 %

7. Research Findings

Table 2 presents the response pattern of the Nigerian respondents.

Table 2:Types of Leader Preferred, Perceived and Rejected across Organisations

Leadership Styles	Preferred	Perceived	Rejected
	%	%	%
Autocratic	7	28	66
Paternalistic	40	32	3
Consultative	30	23	13
Democratic	28	14	24

As Table 2 indicates, only 7 percent of the respondents preferred the autocratic leader with 32 percent perceiving their leader as paternalistic, while 40 percent moderately preferred the paternalistic leader style. From the Table, the autocratic leader meets little sympathy and the most strongly (66 percent) rejected by the Nigerian managers. The paternalistic leader is the most popular among the Nigerian managers. For about one in five Nigerians, the democratic leader is the most often rejected.

7.1. Managerial Levels Analysis

When the scores for managers and professional non-managers were analysed in Table 3, it showed 39 percent of highly educated managers perceived their leader to be paternalistic leader, while in Table 4, 30 percent of the highly educated professional non-managers perceived their leaders as consultative. However, while the managers have a high

preference for the ‘paternalistic’ leader, the professional non-managers placed high preference for the ‘democratic’ leader. This indicates that the experience of working with perceived paternalistic superior or the democratic superior also leads to the development of high power distance norms.

Table 3:Types of Leader Preferred, Perceived and Rejected among the Managers

Leadership Styles	Preferred %	Perceived %	Rejected %
Autocratic	7	31	60
Paternalistic	40	39	3
Consultative	35	15	18
Democratic	18	14	29

Table 4:Types of Leader Preferred, Perceived and Rejected among the Professional Non-Managers

Leadership Styles	Preferred %	Perceived %	Rejected %
Autocratic	7	25	71
Paternalistic	32	25	3
Consultative	22	30	7
Democratic	38	18	19

Nigerian managers are polarized between the paternalistic and consultative leaders. However, they seem more comfortable with the paternalistic leader This polarization of preferences by the Nigerian respondents is not specific to Nigeria, or to Africa; we find it in Hofstede’s (2004) large Power Distance countries and also in Europe, for example, Italy and France (Iguisi, 1998).

7.2 Leadership Styles and Job Satisfaction

Having empirically identified the preferred, perceived and rejected leadership styles for the Nigerian managers and professional non-managers, we will now proceed to cross perceive leadership styles with the work-values of ‘challenging job’, ‘clear job description’, ‘cooperation’ and ‘security of employment’ respectively, which deal with leadership and employees level of satisfaction.

Table 5:Leadership Styles and Employees Level of Satisfaction

Leadership Styles	Autocratic	Paternalistic	Consultative	Democratic
Security of employment				
Satisfied	60 %	78 %	49 %	28 %
Dissatisfied	40 %	22 %	51 %	72%
Challenging tasks				
Satisfied	65 %	70 %	69 %	63 %
Dissatisfied	35 %	30 %	31 %	37 %
Cooperation				
Satisfied	70 %	75 %	20 %	58 %
Dissatisfied	30 %	25 %	80 %	42 %
Clear job description				
Satisfied	80 %	65 %	50 %	68 %
Dissatisfied	20 %	35 %	50 %	32 %

The results, which are presented in Table 5, defy any uniformity. A high proportion of the respondents (78 percent) said they were satisfied with the security of employment under the paternalistic leader. Correspondingly, dissatisfaction was highest under democratic leader type. It is rather very surprising that 60 percent of the respondents said that they are satisfied with security of employment under the autocratic leader. One possible explanation for this could be that as long as the autocratic leader adopts a non-compromising attitude and provide security of employment for the employees, the employees would be satisfied. Under challenging job, the autocratic and democratic leader was almost at par, but the most exciting result is that the proportion of respondents who were dissatisfied was highest (37 percent) under the participative leader type. This peculiar result could be due to the point that challenging job tends to be associated more with individualism than with participation, whereas, participation tends to agree more with cooperation. There was also another dramatic result under cooperation, where the respondents were more satisfied with cooperation with others under the paternalistic leader type than with either consultative or democratic leader types. A very high proportion of the respondents (80 percent) said they are satisfied with the description of duties under autocratic leader type. Correspondingly, dissatisfaction with clear job description was highest (50 percent) under consultative leader type. It is rather very surprising that as high as 80 percent were satisfied with the autocratic leader type and 68 percent with the democratic leader type. Again, possible explanations could be that as long as the leader adopts a democratic attitude and allows employees define their jobs in their own ways, employees who tend to be self-actualized and inner-directed would not complain. They would do things their own way and be satisfied. One other possible explanation for this could be that clear job description was ranked fairly high and as an autocratic leader would tend to insist on clear-cut procedures and strict compliance with his own rules, employees who value clear-cut definition of duties would tend to favour autocratic leadership at least in this direction.

7.3 Modern versus Traditional Management Styles

As indicated in Table 5, about 80 percent of Nigerians would most probably be demotivated with the democratic leader type and 65 percent would most probably be demotivated with consultative leader type. These would tend to have marked effect the Nigerian employee's work attitudes and would affect their perception of the organisation and its leaders. Now, let's look at the quantitative data from the qualitative open-ended interviews that expand the horizon of the quantitative results to see how the managers and non-managers qualified the perceived and preferred types of leader in their organisations. According to one of the managers:

"My immediate boss corresponds to a consultative type manager. When he wants to take decisions on matters that relate to my expertise, he consults with me and asks for my advice. However, he combines his consultativeness with paternalism attributes. A Nigerian manager who only consults without sense of a father figure in dealing with his subordinates will surely not succeed as the cultural circumstances will negate against his being consultative without being concerned with the well-being of the employees' work and non-work situations". (CoA – MAN)

A professional non-manager said:

"I would strongly prefer not to work under the democratic or autocratic manager. Any manager who manages democratically or autocratically believing that he the boss has absolute or lack confidence in his subordinates will never succeed in this part of the world, as the workers will rebel against such a manager. From the societal perspective, the local culture of collectivism does not mean participation in leadership, rather a leader that works for the collective interest of the society. Therefore, the societal culture will not allow such a style to flourish in the organisation, no matter who holds such power". (CoA – PNMAN)

Yet, another manager said:

"I would strongly prefer a manager that is democratic, which means collective decisions and collective responsibilities. Many good heads are better than one. My boss is more like a consultative manager and here, such managers do not succeed, as he would be seen as someone who does not know his job. His subordinates will not even

respect him as they would read his consultative attitudes with matters that have to do with competency as someone not qualified to do the job”. (CoC – MAN)

Another manager qualified it this way:

“My immediate boss corresponds to a consultative type manager. In all matters that have to do with his subordinates, he consults with us and asks for our opinions. He also have the attributes of a father like attitude (Paternalistic). A Nigerian manager who only consults without sense of a father like figure in dealing with his subordinates will surely not succeed as the environmental circumstances will negate against his being consultative without being concerned with the well-being of the employees’ work and non-work situations”. CoB – MAN)

The qualitative data shows very clear that there is no unanimity in the preference for one particular leadership style by the managers and professional non-managers. The quantitative and qualitative data points to polarization in their preference for different leadership styles. This polarization points to ambiguities, inconsistencies and complexities in managerial leadership styles in Nigerian organisations.

This study shows that most of these Nigerian managers and professional non-managers are no more very traditional in their leadership styles and in their worldviews. They have moved beyond the ‘pure’ traditional value of autocratic/paternalistic leadership styles to embrace modern values of consultative/participative management.

8. Implications of Findings

It is now time to explore the implications of the empirical results for managerial leadership styles in Nigeria. Here we look back to my assumption that the level of employee satisfaction depends on the types of preferred and actual leadership style employed by the different leaders and then connect it with my findings on how the managers and professional non-managers perceive their leaders and their preferences. As was mentioned in the literature, the portion of the questionnaire dealing with leadership styles was based on Likert leadership styles. It is necessary to point out that the four leadership styles described do not necessarily provide exhaustive leadership styles but as we already pointed out, the four styles are useful insofar as the vast majority of people are able to express preference for one of the four styles. To quote Sandler and Hofstede (1980), “In general, managers, who are seen as exhibiting a distinctive style of leadership, are also considered more effective in promoting confidence and satisfaction among employees than managers who are not seen as having a distinctive style”.

So far we have presented the managers and professional non-managers preference of the different leadership styles in ideal modern and traditional typical ways and how they are linked to the employee satisfaction. We will now discuss the commonalities in terms of specific beliefs in common, shared relationships to the different leadership styles. For the convenience of the readers, we have combined the results of the managers and professional non-managers for quick reference in Table 6.

We begin the discussions by looking at the commonalities and the variances in their perceptions of management ideology about leadership styles in Figure 1. A glance at the two columns shows more differences than commonalities. Consider the place of the democratic leadership style between the managers and non-managers in the figure. The professional non-managers place high premium on the democratic leadership style in their preference while the managers’ preference for the democratic is considered second in their rejection. Paternalistic leadership style, which is highly preferred by the managers and the second best by the professional non-managers, is a major influencing factor in their work settings. The two work groups feel that the commonalities and differences should be considered and applied by management in the way they are led to bring about satisfaction in their organisations and in their lives. Now let turn attention to what the managers and non-managers think ought to be done.

Table 6: Modern Leadership Styles

Leader Styles	Column I (Managers)			Column II (Non-Managers)		
	Perception of how the styles are perceived and ought to be applied by the managers			Perception of how the styles are perceived and ought to be applied by the non-managers		
	Preferred %	Perceived %	Rejected %	Preferred %	Perceived %	Rejected %
Autocratic	7	31	60	7	25	71
Paternalistic	40	39	3	32	25	3
Consultative	35	15	18	22	30	7
Democratic	18	14	29	38	18	19

Central to this study is the conflict between ‘modern’ what is done and ‘traditional’, what ought to be done in the employees’ perceptions of managerial leadership styles employ in their work settings. The typical styles and factors emerging from this study are tied to the managers and professional non-managers’ perception of what management applies in leading and what they thought should be done in the prevailing situations. This necessitates the discussion of the ‘ought to be done’ values. We will approach the discussion of these values from both columns.

Table 6 shows the commonalities and differences between the professional non-managers and the managers and the ‘what is done’ and ‘what ought to be done’ columns in what they perceived should influence managerial leadership in their organisations. Focusing on the managers and professional non-managers’ perceptions of what ought to be done in leadership; the readers will note that, for both the managers and non-managers, there is polarization in their preferred leadership styles. Depending on the situation, they would prefer that management should consider applying either the paternalistic or the democratic leadership styles in their organisation. For example, democratic leadership style could be applied when leading the professionals and when leading the human resources non-professionals, paternalistic leadership could be the norm. Apart from the autocratic leadership style, which the managers and non-managers strongly rejected, the other styles are considered effective and applicable within the local environment. The leader’s ability to apply the best and appropriate style makes the difference in his local environment.

9. Conclusions

This study thus casts serious doubts on the validity of the dominant Western universal perspectives in managerial leadership styles in traditional Nigerian organisations. It has been shown that both perspectives – modern and traditional values – suggest that elements of Nigerian traditional values and cultures pose serious challenges to Nigerian managers’ ability to adopt practices that can improve the effectiveness of leadership in their organisations and societies. While some of the modern management values fit very well with the Nigerian traditional values in respect to general management, new empirical research are emerging that tends to expose Nigerian managers to new leadership perspectives. This study introduces a fresh perspective and methodology into the study of managerial leadership styles in Nigeria and invites academics, management and organisational scholars, anthropologists and researchers to rethink the premise of their culture and management discourse and research concepts.

The debate today is whether culture and traditional values can become the foundational myth of modern and effective management in Nigeria. Or on the other hand whether modern management is only possible once the Nigerian cultural and traditional values are no longer as important to Westernized Nigerian managers and elites as it is construed in most management and leadership settings in Nigeria.

The disparity between idealism and realism and the demands of effective managerial leadership realities in this study warns against untrammelled and unthinking transference of Western-based universal models and the practice of leadership in Nigerian cultures. The study calls for caution in the practice of Westernly developed leadership models

that advocate universality in the practice of leadership and for the importation and imposition of training and education practices that draw uncritically on Western management theories and models without due sensitivity to the cultural differences and specificities of traditional values on how leadership is conceived of and practiced among the Nigerians.

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